Capital restructuring of Shipping Corporation of India

251. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for capital restructuring of Shipping Corporation of India;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposed capital structure; and

(c) what is the present profitability of Shipping Corporation of India and what is the expectation after implementing the capital restructuring ?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal under consideration envisages conversion of part of the outstanding loans of Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. to Government into equity with a view to obtain a debt-equity ratio of 3:1 as on 31-3-89:

(c) The profits earned by the Shipping Corporation of India Ltd., during the last two years are as follows :

	Net Profits after Tax (Rs./Crores)
1987-88 . . .	35.87
1988-89 (9 months from 1-7-88 to 31-3-89)	43·85 (provisional)

The profitability will increase after capital restructuring but in view of the large number of factors that affect profitability, it is not possible to give any precise estimate.

Changes relating to freight-containers Industry by International Standard Organisation

252. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether any changes have been made or being contedlated by the International Standard Organisation relating to the freight containers industry for increasing the standard dimensions and ratings of containers;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) what would be the resultant effect of such changes ?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) No change in standard dimensions and ratings or freight containers has been made by International Standard Organisation. A Committee of International Standard Organisation has under its consideration certain proposals for changes.

(b) The Government have reiterated their position that the present standardized dimensions of freight containers should not be changed at this stage.

(c) Containerisation has started picking up in the developing countries only recently and any changes would affect the development of combined transport, especially on the inland transport leg, for the following reasons;

(i) The existing gauge clearance and the maximum moving dimensions do not permit containers of more than 8 ft. 6 inches height on Indian rail/road system.

(ii) Any increase in rating beyond 24,000 KG will lead to serious technical difficulties, such as axle load restrictions and maximum permissible loads on the bridges and highways in India.

(iii) The above changes would also make equipment and infrastructure at the Indian Ports obsolete

with resultant heavy financial repercussions.

Instructions for Independent Functioning of AIR and TV

253. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering an interim autonomous set-up or a management committee for Doordarshan and A.I.R. pending a comprehensive legislation to that effect;

(b) whether Government have given instructions that the Doordarshan and A.I.R. would function independently of the Ministry as reported in the Indian Express dated 12th December, 1989, if so, what are the details of such instructions;

(c) whether Government are examining the Akash Bharti Report and Prasar Bharti Bill if so, what are their salient features and whether Government intend to set up one Corporation for A.I.R. and Doordarshan as recommended in the Bill;

(d) whether an Expert Committee will be constituted to work out the modalities of forming such autonomous bodies; and

(e) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is the firm view of the Government to allow the two electronic media to function independently without any control of the Government, direct or indirect after the autonomous set-up is created.

(c) to (e) The Government have studied the salient features of the Akash Bharati Bill, 1978, the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha on Ist May, 1979, as also basic features of some important broadcasting organisations in the World. These shall be kept in view in the Bill confering autonomous status to the two media proposed to be introduced during the current session of the Parliament.

Functioning of Telecom Department and Telecom Commission

254. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman of Telecom Commission has resigned following dfferences with the Government;

(b) whether Government are satisfied with Commission's functioning and performance with regard to development of indigenous technology; and

(c) whether Government are considering bifurcation of the Telecom Department and the Telecom Commission and whether the Telecom Board would be revived?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) No resignation has been received from the Chairman of the Telecom Commission.

(b) The Commission was set up on 3-5-89 and charged with certain tasks. The Commission's performance is reviewed from time to time.

(c) No such specific proposals are under consideration.